

# COMMUTING BY BICYCLE

## TIPS FOR COMMUTERS

## **Commuting Gear Basics**

### Picking a Bike

- Any bike can work for commuting as long as it is in good working order.
- You might want to have your bike checked out at one of the local bike shops (Bicycle Station at 1201 Washington Street or Columbus Cycling and Fitness 833 16th Street) or the Columbus Bike Co-op in the basement of the United Way Center, 1531 Thirteenth Street.

### **Carrying Capacity**

- A rear rack with panniers ("saddlebags"), a front basket, or a backpack can all work well; each has advantages and disadvantages
- Panniers cost the most and are usually waterproof.
- Baskets don't carry very much.
- Backpacks can make you sweat through your clothes.

#### **Clothing**

- If you enjoy a leisurely pace to work you may be able to ride in your work clothes in most weather.
- In cooler weather a headband and wind resistant gloves are essential.
- Your outer layer should have some reflective element, especially if you know it's likely you'll be riding at times other than full sunlight.
- Don't worry about how you look! Comfort and function are what you are after.

### Fenders/Chain Guard

- Full fenders are recommended and will help keep moisture, dirt and mud off your clothes.
- A chain guard can help keep your pants clean.

### Lights

- Headlights are mandatory after dusk. Make sure yours is bright enough to help you see any road/path hazards.
- A red flashing light on the back greatly increases your visibility to anyone approaching from the rear.
- Check batteries and replace them as soon as your lights start to dim.

### **Tools/Spare Parts**

- Bring only tools you know how to use.
- Have a pump and a spare tube. Keep another spare tube at work.
- Learn how to use a multi-tool with allen wrenches, screwdriver and chain tool.



## Safety

- Always wear a helmet no matter what.
- Replace your helmet every three years.
- Replace your helmet if you are ever in a crash.
- Prevent injury by knowing the rules of the road.
- Share the road. Both cars and cyclists have responsibility for safety.
- Ride predictably.

#### Maintenance

### **ABC** safety check

<u>Air</u> in your tires <u>Brakes</u> work properly <u>Chain</u> is lubricated

## Picking a Route

- In general, don't bike on the same roads you drive to work on.
- Look for streets that parallel the main streets but have less traffic.
- Talk with others who live near you and bike to work to find out their routes.
- Use Google Maps; they have options for choosing the best route for driving, transit, walking or biking.
- Try your route out on a weekend when the traffic may be diminished.
- Find a "bike buddy" to go with you the first few times you ride to work for extra support.

## Parking Your Bike

- Always lock your bike.
- Lock it to a fixed, immovable object, preferably a bike rack. Be careful that your bike can't be lifted over the top of the object to which it is locked.
- Keep it in a well-lit and visible location.
- If you are using a U lock, position it so the keyway is facing down towards the ground. The tighter the lock is, the harder it is for someone to get tools in place to cut or damage your lock.
- Secure all components and accessories (such as using a secondary, cable lock) or take them with you.
- Double check that your lock is secure before walking away.

## Tips for Employers

- Employees who ride their bikes to work tend to be more alert and productive and are generally in better health.
- Cyclists help clear out congested parking lots.
- According to one study, biking to work reduces absenteeism by 900% and increases productivity by 300%. (<a href="www.cycle2job.co.uk/index.php/latest">www.cycle2job.co.uk/index.php/latest</a>)
- Reduce your company's impact on the environment.

#### Resources

- To log your biking miles: www.greenlightride.com
- More tips for commuting: www.bikesbelong.org or www.bikeleague.org/resources
- Find out how much you're saving on gas: www.commutebybike.com

